

# Wisconsin Bowhunter Wildlife Survey 2003

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## **Abstract**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in conjunction with the Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA) and the Wisconsin Bowhunters Association (WBA) surveyed members of the WBA to help track mammalian and avian wildlife populations.

## **Methods**

A survey was included in the 1997-2003 fall issues of *The Bowhunter* (official publication of the WBA) for bowhunters to remove and record the animals seen during their hunting trips. At the completion of the 2003 archery season, hunters were asked to return the completed survey to the WDNR, by tri-folding the survey with the postage paid side visible, and dropping it in the mailbox. No return postage was necessary.

## **Results**

Wisconsin bowhunters sent back 122 Bowhunter Wildlife surveys after the completion of the 2003 archery season. This was slightly higher than in 2002 when 118 hunters returned surveys. These 122 bowhunters averaged 22.7 trips into the field during the archery season. The average total hours hunted during the season was 71.5. The average time spent hunting during a single day was 3.1 hours. This is in comparison to the 2002 season where hunters averaged 20.6 trips, 68.0 hours hunted during the season, and 3.3 hours per day. During Both years, most trips were taken in the month of October, followed by November, September, and December.

Not surprisingly, the animal most frequently sighted while hunting were deer (Table 1). Hunters reported sighting an average of 61.6 deer per season and 2.7 deer per trip. This is in comparison to the 2002 season where hunters averaged seeing 48.6 deer a season and 2.4 deer per trip. Although the survey does not ask questions about harvest, it is possible that a change in hunter effort due to harvest success could cause a change in survey response from year to year.

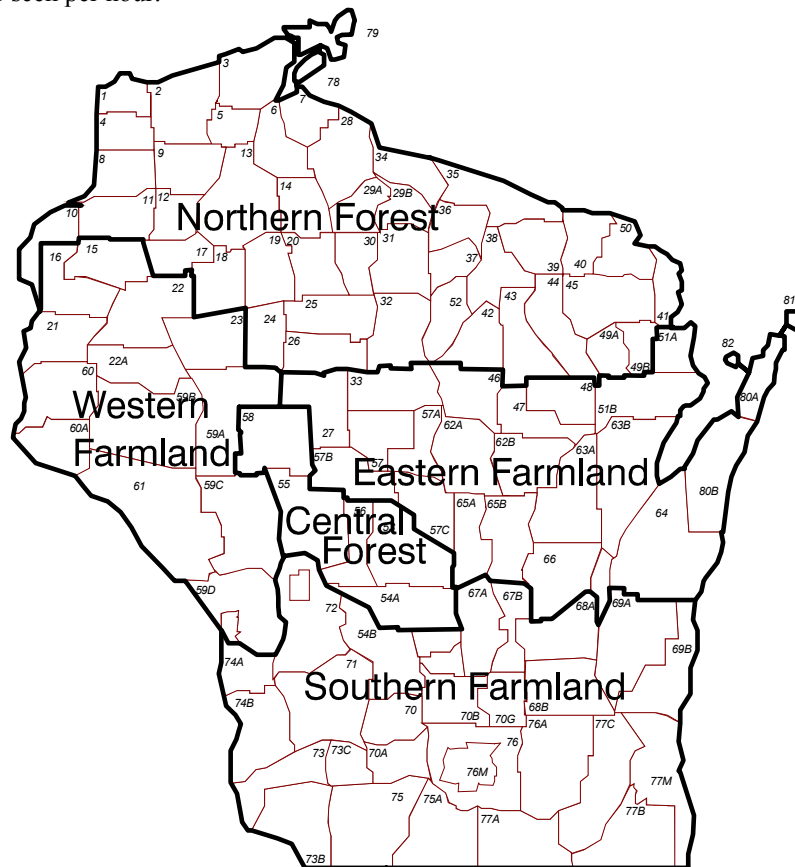
The next most frequently sighted animal was wild turkey. Archers averaged seeing 1.5 turkeys per trip. This is in comparison to the 2002 season when hunters averaged seeing 1.3 turkeys per trip. Fox (both red and gray) and ruffed grouse followed turkeys as some of the more frequently seen wildlife. The least frequently sighted animals were the otter, wolf, bobcat, badger, and American marten.

Hunters were also asked to report animals they saw that were not listed on the survey form. Some of the most frequently reported species were pheasant, squirrel, opossum, crane, owl, and woodcock. A few of the more interesting reports were of a Cooper's hawk, mink, flying squirrel, bald eagle, and weasel. The data collected from this survey will be used by the WDNR in estimating distribution and abundance of Wisconsin's wildlife.

**Table 1.** Total number of animals seen during the 2003 archery season by deer management region (number seen per 1,000 hours hunted).

Species	Region					Statewide
	Central Forest	Eastern Farmland	Northern Forest	Southern Farmland	Western Farmland	
American Marten	--	1 (0.4)	--	--	--	1 (0.1)
Badger	--	1 (0.4)	--	1 (0.3)	--	2 (0.2)
Black Bear	--	7 (2.8)	14 (10.9)	--	--	21 (2.4)
Bobcat	--	1 (0.4)	2 (1.6)	--	--	3 (0.3)
Coyote	4 (7.7)	13 (5.2)	6 (4.7)	56 (15.3)	--	79 (9.2)
Deer	285 (0.6) <sup>1</sup>	2,752 (1.1) <sup>1</sup>	701 (0.5) <sup>1</sup>	2,992 (0.8) <sup>1</sup>	673 (1.1) <sup>1</sup>	7,403 (0.9) <sup>1</sup>
Fisher	--	1 (0.4)	6 (4.7)	--	1 (1.6)	8 (0.9)
Fox (Red & Gray)	--	100 (40.2)	7 (5.4)	282 (77.3)	8 (12.5)	397 (46.3)
House Cat	1 (1.9)	16 (6.4)	9 (7.0)	72 (19.7)	10 (15.6)	108 (12.6)
Otter	--	8 (3.2)	--	1 (0.3)	--	9 (1.0)
Porcupine	4 (7.7)	6 (2.4)	15 (11.6)	3 (0.8)	1 (1.6)	29 (3.4)
Raccoon	6 (11.6)	73 (29.3)	23 (17.9)	131 (35.9)	13 (20.3)	246 (28.7)
Ruffed Grouse	13 (25.1)	63 (25.3)	138 (107.2)	22 (6.0)	46 (71.8)	282 (32.9)
Skunk	--	4 (1.6)	2 (1.6)	19 (5.2)	5 (7.8)	30 (3.5)
Turkey	259 (500.4)	977 (392.7)	154 (119.6)	1,844 (505.4)	765 (1194)	3,999 (466.0)
Wolf	--	1 (0.4)	4 (3.1)	--	--	5 (0.6)

<sup>1</sup> Expressed as deer seen per hour.



**Figure 1.** Wisconsin deer management regions.